

NOTE: The interview began at 5:13 p.m. The President spoke via satellite from the Rhode Island Convention Center in Providence, RI. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Interview With Van Harden, Bonnie Lucas, and Bob Quinn of WHO Radio, Des Moines, Iowa

November 2, 1994

Mr. Harden. Well, we're very fortunate to have a very special guest on the phone with us here today, here on "Van and Bonnie in the Morning," President Bill Clinton. Mr. President, welcome to WHO Radio.

The President. Thanks, it's nice to be back with you. I was there once before, remember?

1993 Flood

Mr. Harden. Yes, I was just going to say, the last time we talked we—well, you were here filing up sand bags, helping us with water jugs, and all that.

The President. Yes, we had a lot of water the last time I was there. I'll never forget that.

Mr. Harden. Times are a lot better now, we're happy to report. And we want to thank you, too, for especially the moral support you lent us during that time because, as you found out, it was not very good back then.

The President. It was difficult but, you know, I was honored to be able to do it, and I'm proud of the response that we had from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and Secretary Espy and all the others. We worked very hard with the people of Iowa on that flood, and I was honored to do it.

Mr. Harden. Well, you got a chance to see from the airplane a lot of the agricultural—our crops and things that were going on. And we have Bob Quinn, our farm director, here that would like to ask you a few questions in that regard.

The President. Hello, Bob.

Ethanol

Mr. Quinn. Mr. President, when we talked in April of '93, the first time we met in New York City, we talked about your support of ethanol and the clean air bill. Well,

the clean air bill, as you well know, has kind of stalled out; it's blocked in court. What's your stance on ethanol? Still supporting ethanol?

The President. I'm still strongly for it. As you know, we stayed with our commitment, and we went forward with the ethanol policy, which was strongly supported by the farmers in the Middle West. And we've been sued in court; I think we'll win that lawsuit. I think that it is within the policy discretion of our Government to support ethanol. I think it's good for agriculture, good for the environment, and I still have the same position.

Farm Bill

Mr. Quinn. You know, we're talking about the farm bill right now, and we've heard some talk over the weekend from the Republican side that there may be some cutting of farm programs. Now, in your farm bill plan, do you hope to reduce spending or cut farm programs at all?

The President. Well, I think we need to make a distinction between what the two alternatives are here, because they are dramatic.

We've already figured into the budget and all the farm groups have supported the fact that the subsidy programs themselves will be somewhat less costly in the years ahead because of the trade agreements and especially the GATT agreement. But the reason for that is that we've got agreement from our competitors, especially in Europe, to cut their subsidies. And our products are so much more competitive, we're going to sell more on the markets around the world, and that's going to increase farm income. That's a good thing and, I think everyone would admit, an appropriate thing to do.

What they're talking about is something very different from that. They have made all these promises. They've promised to cut taxes—mostly for the rich, but they just want to throw tax cuts around; they've promised to spend more on defense and on Star Wars; and they promised to balance the budget in 5 years.

Now, the House Budget Committee did an analysis and basically says if they do that, they'll just have to cut everything across the board: \$2,000 a Social Security recipient a

year, cut Medicare, cut farm programs, cut veterans programs. If they back out of cutting Social Security, then they have to cut everything else 30 percent across the board. If they back out of that, we're right back into the trickle-down economics of the eighties, where we explode the deficit and put the economy in the ditch. So, they're in a pickle. They've made a bunch of promises that the only way they can keep their promises is to devastate the farm programs.

We've got a chance to be very creative and flexible in the '95 farm bill and do some things that help farmers without being imprudent with our tax dollars. You know, we can't do what they want; we cannot. And that's why I'm telling all the people in the farm belt, you know, you just don't need to send people to Congress that are addicted to this rather way-out contract notion that you can promise people the Moon and there are no consequences to it. It's not the way to run a country. We need to run our country with discipline and look towards the future.

Talk Radio

Mr. Harden. Mr. President, the last time you were here, you graciously did a talk show for us on WHO. We were mostly talking about the flood. But when you were done, I said, "Well, you do a pretty good talk show," and you said, well, you might like to host a show like that someday. And I just was curious as to when you think you might be available?

The President. Well, I hope it won't be quite—[laughter]—let me say this, I hope it'll be longer before I'm available than some talk show hosts hope it will be. [Laughter] But I'd like to do it because I think that radio is in some ways more intimate than television even. And I think that talk shows can be very, very helpful in furthering the national dialog. But I think that it's important that they really be conversations and not screaming matches and not just a form of attack journalism. Because when you do that, nobody learns anything, and people are liable to have their heads full of facts that aren't accurate. So, I think it's like any other weapon: The more powerful it is, the more potential you have for good; the more potential you have for harm.

White House Communications

Ms. Lucas. We want to know, Mr. President, do you really have a red telephone in your office? And if so, who calls you on it?

The President. [Laughter] No, it's not red, but I do have two sets of phones. I have my normal set of phones, and then I have a set of phones that have absolutely secure lines that are not subject to anybody tapping or intervening on. And I use it on occasions for secure conversations, normally with foreign leaders who have something very sensitive they want to discuss with me and they're worried that they don't want anybody in their country or our country to know about it. It's not red, but it is secure.

Mr. Harden. Mr. President, thank you so much for taking the time with us, and we'll see you tomorrow here in Iowa.

The President. Can't wait.

Mr. Harden. Okay.

The President. Thanks.

NOTE: The interview began at 6:05 p.m. The President spoke by telephone from the Rhode Island Convention Center in Providence, RI, for broadcast at 8 a.m. on November 3. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks at a Rally for Democratic Candidates in Providence, Rhode Island

November 2, 1994

Thank you very much. Thank you for this wonderful welcome, and thank you for being about twice as large a crowd as we thought we'd have and for being so good-humored about us losing the sound. I want to thank, first of all, the bands from Cranston East and Cranston West High School. Let's give them a hand. [Applause] You know, folks, when I ran for President, my slogan was "Don't stop thinking about tomorrow." And there are a couple of people here with signs that say that today. But one of them is right down here with a group of people who are tomorrow, from the Maryville Elementary School. Welcome. Glad to see you. I am delighted to be here today with my good friend Senator Claiborne Pell who just came back with me on our mission of peace to the Middle East.